

# **APPLYING PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING IN MARKETING A FINANCIAL SERVICES CLASS**

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## **Abstract**

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a student centred approach that gives power to learners to explore and connect the dots between theories and practice. This paper is based on an on-going research that attempt to examine students experience of using PBL in learning of Marketing Financial Services subject by understanding the positive and negative experiences of PBL in order to improve current teaching delivery from teacher-centred learning to student-centred learning. Data collection will involve distribution of survey questionnaire exploring students experience of using PBL in the learning process. Findings from this research is essential to examine the applicability of using PBL as teaching approach in the classroom.

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a student centered approach that gives power to the leaners to explore and connect the dots between theories and practice (Savery, 2006). It is an educational strategy where learning is driven by a problem and students work in teams to learn more about the problem, conduct a research, communicate to each other, apply many essential skills and enjoy the fruits of active learning (Othman et al., 2013).

Previous studies have shown that the implentation of PBL in teaching and learning provides numerous advantages among students. For instance, PBL is not entirely about problem solving, but rather it uses appropriate problems to increase knowledge and understanding (Wood, 2003). It gives the opportunities to the students to examine and try out what they already know, discover what they need to learn, develop people skills by achieing higher performance in teams, and improve students' writing and speaking abilities (Spence, n.d.). PBL also has the potential to help learners to develop flexible understanding and lifelong learning skills (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

Implementation of PBL in teaching and learning has been used in many medical schools (Wood, 2003; Hung et al., 2007). On the other hand, studies examining students experience using PBL in marketing subjects are limited. Therefore, this study attempts to examine students experience of using PBL in teaching and learning of Marketing Financial Services subject in order to improve current teaching delivery from teacher-centred learning to student-centred learning.

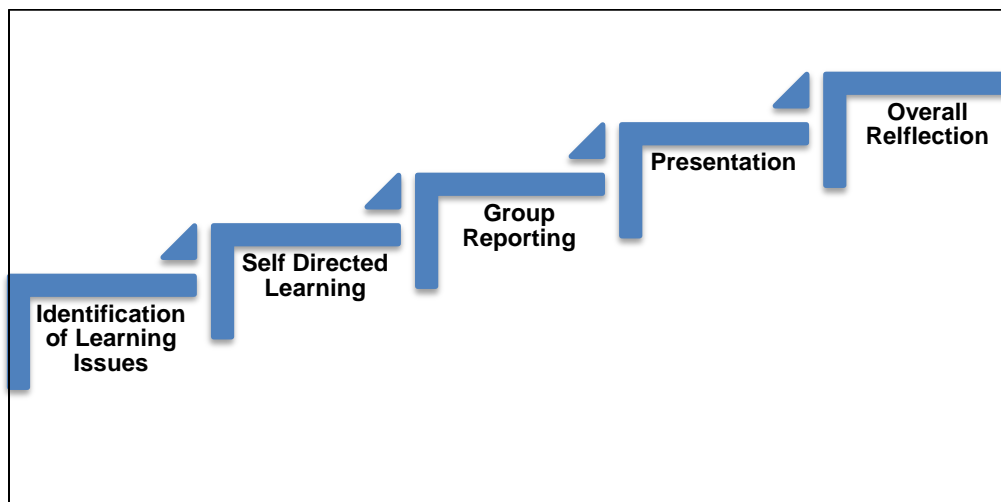
## **Implementation of PBL in Class**

In this study, researchers have implemented PBL in teaching and learning of Marketing Financial Services subject. The subject is enrolled by final year students from Bachelor of Marketing (Financial Services) and Bachelor of Muamalat. Students meet the lecturer twice a week for lecture and tutorial sessions. PBL is used during tutorial sessios whereby the number of students per class is small. PBL is implemented in tutorial classes starting from the second week of semester. Tutors handling the classes have undergone formal PBL training. Tutor roles in each tutorial class are as facilitator. Each class will normally take between one and half hour to two hours. In the beginning of the semester, students are briefed on what they are going to expect throughout the semester and on the implementation of PBL during the tutorials.

Students are asked to form a group of eight (8) members. Each group member will play specific role in each session such as group leader, secretary, scribe and observers of the group. These roles are rotated among the group members every week in order to provide participants experience the different roles of an effective PBL session. In each tutorial class, students will

be given a trigger that corresponds to the materials being covered in the lecture. Trigger materials are the key that generate the learning issues pertaining to the learning objectives of a particular problem (Arzuman, 2010). Triggers used are various including video, text and picture.

PBL process conducted in the class follows the 5 Ladders of Active Learning (Othman et al., 2013). As shown in Diagram 1, students are exposed to the identification of learning issues, self-directed learning, group reporting, presentation and overall reflection in these 5 ladders (Othman et al., 2014). At ladder 1, students are required to identify learning issues using three (3) Active Thinking Points (identification of the facts, ideas generation and identification of learning issues). Then, at ladder 2, the students will have to embark on self-directed learning activities including reading, watching videos, summarizing the unit and to search for additional and supporting learning materials. At Ladder 3, the students will have to conduct a/several meeting/s, report the results of their self-directed learning to the group and prepare for the presentation at Ladder 4. At Ladder 4, the students will have to present the outcomes of their learning. The presentation can be in many forms. Finally, at Ladder 5, the students will be provided with a number of proper exercises to improve their learning. To move from ladder to another ladder, students are required to complete a reflection form whereby they will make a reflection on what they have learned.



**Figure 1:** 5 Ladders of Active Learning

## Discussion and Conclusion

This paper is based on an on-going research whereby the Marketing Financial Services subject is still being carried out. At the end of the semester, students will be given a set of survey questionnaire consisting questions examining the students experience using PBL in the learning process. Items for the survey questionnaire are taken from a study by Michele Garvey (2011) and Othman et al. (2013). The survey questionnaire is divided into several sections. Section A will consist of questions asking the students' previous knowledge of PBL. Section B and C consist of questions asking students experience regarding independent study within PBL and roles within PBL. Finally in Section D, open ended question will be asked so that students can provide their opinion with regards to the implementation of PBL as a learning method in the class. Findings from this study are essential to examine the applicability of using PBL in students' learning process.

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